

Every Child Learning Every Day



March 2003

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

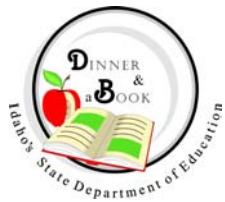
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READY TO LEARN

What to do, when a dog meows?

Idaho teachers have shared some of their favorite books and activities for children as part of Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's "Dinner and a Book" initiative.

This month's suggestion was submitted by Rogene Meyer, Title I teacher at Harrison Elementary School, Twin Falls.



Book:

"Bark, George" published in 1999 by Harper Collins.

Story synopsis: When George, the dog, is asked to "bark" by his mother, he makes a variety of other sounds instead. Solving the mystery leads to a trip to the vet.

Activity suggestions:

Use a paper bag to make a puppet. Color the bottom of the bag (attach ears, nose, eyes if materials are available). Use the puppet to act out the story.

Conversation topics could include questions such as - "What would you do to help George bark?" "What would you do if you were George?" "What kind of a dog do you think George is?" "What is your favorite dog?" and "If you could have any pet, what would it be?"

To learn more about Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's Dinner and Book visit: www.sde.state.id.us/DinnerandaBook.

Schools play a role in preschool

Dear Reader:

I am often asked what role the State Department of Education and public schools play in the education of preschool children. In Idaho, the answer is not a simple one.

In some cases, local school districts provide a direct preschool service because state law requires schools to serve children with disabilities beginning at age 3. Funding for education services for these young students comes from state and federal sources.

However, for the general population of students, school districts are limited in the services they may provide using state dollars. The state begins funding its general support for education with kindergarten-aged students.

The State Department of Education also has a part to play through federal programs such as Even Start Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education and nutri-



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

ment of Education and nutrition programs funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The department works

closely with Head Start and Migrant Head Start programs as well as the Department of Health and Welfare and the Office of the Governor on pre-K issues.

We also reach out to parents through my Dinner and a Book program, this newsletter, and other supports.

With so many different players in preschool education, it can be confusing to keep track of efforts under way. Knowing that, one of the department's greatest roles is to help support communication and coordination among early childhood programs.

It is our hope that by working together, Idaho will have a consistent goal for preschool education to help prepare children for success in school and life.

READY TO LEARN

Listening helps build understanding

"Read a variety of traditional and electronic materials for information and understanding." What does this standard mean for the preschool child? One of the skills that young children learn is to attend to different sounds in the environment.

Some activities that will help children with the learning to identify different sounds might be:

- Listening to sounds on a tape or compact disc, and matching the sound to a picture, such as cars, the doorbell, paper crinkling, animal sounds.
- Listening to an adult read books that talk about different sounds in the environment, practicing the sounds together.
- Making up stories about sounds at home, at the fire house or farm after a field trip.
- Singing songs such as *The Wheels on the Bus*.

Below are activities to try:

Choo-Choo Train



Recite the following poem with the children and encourage them to act out the movements.

This is a choo-choo train
(Bend arms at elbows)
Pulling down the track!
(Rotate arms in rhythm)
Now it's going forward
(Rotate arms forward)
Now it's going back
(Rotate arms backward)
Now the bell is ringing,
(Sing a ringing sound)
Now the whistle blows
(Whistle and blow)
What a lot of noise it makes
(Cover ears with hands)
Everywhere it goes!
(Stretch out arms)

Warble, Cheep or Tweet: Name That Tune

READING STANDARDS

Each month, the Early Childhood Newsletter focuses on a preschool reading standard. This month's standard is "Read a variety of traditional and electronic materials for information and understanding."

Children are full of wonder and curiosity about nature. You can find taped bird songs and bird books at the library, magazines, or even on the Internet!

Note the places where you might see the birds during the day.

In a circle, read a book about birds, show the pictures of the birds you will be trying to find and hear.

Play their songs. Now try to hear the bird songs and see the birds. When you return, you might like to draw pictures of the birds and dictate a story about your nature hike.



RESOURCES

Is your public playground a safe place?

Each year, more than 200,000 children go to emergency rooms with injuries associated with playground equipment. Most injuries occur when a child falls from the equipment onto the ground.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, www.cpsc.gov, offers a simple checklist to help adults evaluate whether a playground is a safe place for children to play.

Public Playground Safety Checklist

****Make sure surfaces around playground equipment have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand, or pea gravel, or there are mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.**

****Check that protective surfacing extends at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends, in back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar.**

****Make sure play structures more than 30 inches high are spaced at least 9 feet apart.**

****Check for dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends.**

****Make sure spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.**

****Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.**

****Look out for tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.**

****Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have guardrails to prevent falls.**

****Check playgrounds regularly to see that equipment and surfacing are in good condition.**

****Carefully supervise children on playgrounds to make sure they are safe.**

SAFETY WEEK

The National Program for Playground Safety has designated April 21-25 as National Playground Safety Week 2003.

The purpose of the week is to focus on playground safety and to advocate safety and injury prevention on playgrounds.

For more information: www.unl.edu/playground/safety_week.html

NUTRITION

Kids can do a lot to help in the kitchen

Children love to help prepare food. Helping promotes learning and appreciation for a variety of foods.

U.S. Department of Agriculture developmental guidelines detail how children be involved in food preparation at various ages.

2 year olds can:

Wipe table tops, scrub vegetables, tear lettuce leaves, play with utensils;

3 year olds can:

Knead and shape yeast



dough, shake liquids, spread soft spread, place things in the trash;

4 year olds can do what 2 and 3 year olds can do plus:

Peel oranges and hard cooked eggs, form round shapes, mash bananas, set the table;

5 and 6 year olds can do the above and:

Measure ingredients, cut with a blunt knife.

Young children can help with this snack recipe.

Berries with banana cream

1/2 cup reduced fat sour cream

1/2 small ripe banana cut into chunks

1 tablespoon frozen orange

TRAINING

"Off to a Good Start," training for sponsors of Child and Adult Care Food Programs will be March 5, Twin Falls; March 11, Lewiston; April 3, Nampa; April 8, Idaho Falls.

juice concentrate

2 cups sliced strawberries, blueberries, raspberries or a combination

Combine sour cream, banana and juice concentrate in a blender and blend until smooth. Place berries in a serving dish and top with sour cream mixture. Half a cup berries topped with banana cream with a 1/2 slice of wheat toast is a nutritious snack for young children.

READY TO LEARN

Identifying shapes builds geometry skills

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics offers simple tips to help parents help children understand math. **This month's skill — measurements using time.** Measurement is an important way for young

children to look for relationships in the real world.

What adults can do: Young children won't understand the concept of time. However, they can learn that some activities take longer than others. Compare one activity with another to figure out what takes more time. Start by asking simple questions like "Who can stand on one foot longer?"



Set end-of-time limits. "You can only play for 5 more minutes, then we have to go." At first children won't know what the minutes mean, but gradually they will understand the idea of time passing.

You can relate units of time to counting by using a watch to time events and counting the ticks on the second hand of the watch by saying, "1 second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds" without timing the event. This uses counting to help children develop a sense of the passing of time.

Start time talk with ideas like "after lunch" or "after dinner" that provide solid milestones for children. It is not until children are older that they understand more abstract notions like yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

ACTIVITIES

Celebrate Week of the Young Child April 6-12

What is the Week of the Young Child?

The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life.

What is the Week of the Young Child theme?

The theme for the Week of the Young Child 2003 is Children's Opportunities - Our Responsibilities.



Why focus on young children and early childhood programs?

More is known today than ever before about the importance of children's earliest years in shaping their learning and development. Yet, never before have the needs of young children and their fami-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The National Association for the Education of Youth Children offers ideas for Week of the Young Child Celebrations as well as materials to buy available on its website at: www.naeyc.org.

lies been more pressing.

The Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize that children's opportunities are our responsibilities, and to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child experiences the type of early environment - at home, at child care, at school, and in the community - that will promote their early learning.